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BISHOP

COLENZO'S OBJECTIONS

TO

THE VERACITY

OF

THE PENTATEUCH:

AN EXAMINATION

BY THE

REV. BOURCHIER WREY SAVILE, M.A.,

CURATE OF TATTINGSTONE,

*Author of "Revelation and Science," in Reply to "Essays and Reviews."*

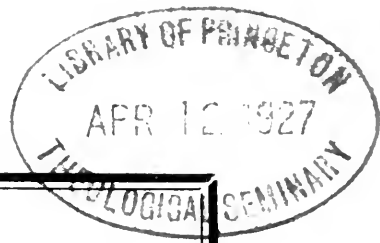
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By the same Author, crown 8vo, (pp. 480,) 5s.,

**FIRST AND SECOND ADVENT,**

IN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE,

WITH REFERENCE TO THE JEW, THE GENTILE, AND THE CHURCH.

“The object of this work is twofold; to show, first, that the saints of old were warranted in looking, when they did as Simeon and Anna are represented as doing, ‘for the consolation of Israel,’ in the coming of the promised Shiloh at the time of the first Advent; and secondly, that the Church of God is warranted, on the same grounds, at this present time in expecting the return of that same Messiah in all the glories of the second Advent.”

AN EXAMINATION  
OF  
BISHOP COLENSO'S OBJECTIONS.

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“OH ! that mine adversary had written a book,” was the natural exclamation of the afflicted Job. The believers in the veracity of that Book, which, according to the admission of one of England’s greatest philosophers, has “God for its author, Salvation for its end, and Truth without any mixture of error for its matter,” have had this wish gratified to the fullest extent in the recent publication of two works, proceeding from opposite quarters of the theological world, of a totally different tendency, and with entirely distinct objects in view, but the effect of which upon every reasonable being, we cannot doubt, will be to make conviction doubly sure of the truth of the Apostolic affirmation, in reply to the vain fancies and follies of those who are wise in their own conceits :—“ Let God be true, but every man a liar ; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”

Dr. Manning, a noted apostate from the Catholic to the Roman Church, has lately raised a lance in behalf of the temporal power of the Papacy, which he has the con-

fidence to defend upon these grounds :—“That it is ordained of God ; that it has been the root and sustaining principle of Christian Europe ; that the form of government which it has evolved is the most perfect, the freest and most republican, and the most popular in Europe ; that the worst which can be said against the 250 Popes who have governed Rome is, that a few of them may have descended to the level of temporal sovereigns, and that in the event of the secular power of the Papacy being overthrown, chaos would o’ershadow Christendom, and be exchanged for its present liberty and light.” \*

Astounding as such claims appear when put forth in the middle of the nineteenth century, after all they are but natural and consistent in the mouth of an ultramontanist such as Dr. Manning shows himself to be. The outrage on the evidence of our senses alike proclaims their absurdity, and is sufficiently patent to make any further refutation needless. Marvellous, however, as is this specimen of extreme superstition on the part of one who must have been reared in the liberty and light of England, it does not present so sad and unseemable a spectacle as that other work which we are now about to examine, and which exhibits a bishop of one of the purest branches of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church on earth descending to the regions of scepticism and doubt in reference to that which is so intensely dear to every Christian’s heart, viz., the perfection and truthfulness of every portion of God’s Word.

What Dr. Manning is in *defence* of the Papacy, that

\* “The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” By Henry Edward Manning, D.D., *passim*.

Bishop Colenso is in *offence* against the veracity of the Pentateuch. It requires little discernment to detect the sophistries of an author, whose work, on account of the quarter from which it emanates, and for that reason alone, has certainly surprised both the friends and enemies of religion in the present day. The title of the work is a misnomer; the preface displays a certain amount of special pleading; and the body of the work is a series of blunders from beginning to end. "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua, *critically* examined by the Right Rev. John William Colenso, D.D., Bishop of Natal," is the title of the work in question. How far applicable as regards the Pentateuch our readers will presently be able to decide; but as regards the book of Joshua we conclude the criticisms are reserved for a future volume, as in the part already published they can only be described as being conspicuous for their absence. The special pleading of the preface is manifest, as it shows a consciousness that the author's present frame of mind is very inconsistent with the position of one who has sworn, "with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and *strange* doctrine contrary to God's Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same."\* If the bishop's objections to the veracity of God's Word be not "*strange*," to say the least, there can be no exact meaning affixed to the force of the English tongue. They can only be described as of that "nose-of-wax" character, with which Hooker defines certain perversions of Scripture prevalent in his own day, and which may be said to have

\* 'Consecration Service of a Bishop,' from the "Book of Common Prayer."

culminated from the time when Pope Boniface VIII. found Papal supremacy in the first verse of the Bible by reading "the Pope and the Emperor" *vice* "the Heavens and the Earth," down to the present day, when Dr. John Henry Newman made the marvellous discovery that the prophecy in the Apocalypse respecting the number of the beast was fulfilled in the Reformed British Parliament !\*

Great will be the relief of any moderately taught biblical scholar by the careful study of every one of the bishop's objections to the veracity of the Pentateuch. There is so much confidence expressed in the preface by the bishop respecting their unanswerable nature, that we own to having experienced a momentary sinking of the heart lest there should have been some ground for this premature episcopal boast. In the course of a few minutes, however, all fear was happily dispelled by a glance at *Objection* § 1. We may fairly presume that, as it occupies the post of honour, and as the biblical statement to which the objection is made is accompanied by the epithet "incredible," it must be deemed the strongest which the mind of a Cambridge wrangler and a Christian bishop could bring against the veracity of God's Word. We shall presently test the force of this objection, and we are venturesome enough to declare if this is all (and the rest of the present episcopal objections appear of a similar character) that can be brought against the veracity of the Pentateuch, there is not much cause to fear.

The present day has witnessed the "strange" spectacle of three classes of persons unconsciously combining to undermine the credibility of God's revelation to man; and, singular enough, the strength of the attack is in an *inverse*

\* See Bunsen's "Hippolytus," vol. ii. p. 143.



ratio to the position in Christendom which the assailants occupy. The late Baron Bunsen brought forth his great stores of learning in order to shake the credibility of Moses as an historian, and to exalt Manetho in his stead. Amongst many other objections to the truthfulness of God's Word, he contends that the longevity of the patriarchs, as recorded in Scripture, is sufficient to disprove its claim to being received as historical, specifying in particular the instance of Joseph, who attained the age of 110, and which he proposes to reduce to 78, as being most agreeable to his own crude fancies of the way in which Bible history ought to be written. Now, it so happens, that a recent discovery amongst the Egyptian inscriptions of the British Museum, as well as in certain hieratic papyri, shows that in the reign of Pharaoh Assa, who preceded the famous XVIIIth dynasty (the head of which unquestionably was "the king that knew not Joseph"), and in whose reign Joseph must have died at "110 years of age," according to the declaration in Scripture, that same amount of years became from that time the conventional mode amongst the Egyptians of expressing a green old age, just as we are in the habit of speaking of an octogenarian or a centegenarian. Thus the untempered shaft which Bunsen aimed against the Bible became turned against himself; and the effect of the learned German's manifesto against the veracity of the Pentateuch sufficiently proves that, if he was a giant in scepticism as regards Scripture, he was a perfect child in credulity in reference to the contradictions and absurdities of his idol Manetho.

Of a similar character was the attack made by the seven noted authors of "Essays and Reviews" against the truth

of the Bible. Their onslaught was deemed, even by their own friends, more unbecoming than that of Bunsen, inasmuch as six of their number being clergymen, they were bound by every moral tie to defend the faith they sought to destroy. And now the Church has witnessed, to her amazement, if not to her disgust, one of her highest servants—one who ought to be considered as “worthy of double honour”—coming forward to assist the infidel and the sceptic in their vain endeavours to impugn the integrity and veracity of the Word of God.

However wise in the wisdom of the world these three separate parties may be—and their learning (which every one must allow) should only increase their merited condemnation—we venture to state, after a due consideration of all the objections which they have severally brought against the veracity of the Bible, that they can only be properly defined by the degrees of comparison; *e.g.*, the objections of Bunsen, a layman, are *weak* and feeble in the extreme; those of the six presbyters are still *weaker*; and those of the bishop are *weakest* of all, as it will be now our endeavour to show.

We propose to take the bishop’s objections to the veracity of the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua *seriatim*, accompanied by as brief a reply as their nature will admit.

§ 1. *Objection*.—The Pentateuch states that Hezron and Hamul, the sons of Pharez, who was the son of Judah, were born before the descent into Egypt; and the bishop, inferring that Judah having married *after* Joseph had been sold as a slave, there was not time in the interval for Judah to become a grandfather in the manner

stated in Scripture, complacently adds: "The above being incredible, we are obliged to conclude that one of the two accounts must be untrue" (pp. 17-19). *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch is overthrown.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop assumes that the expression "at that time," in Gen. xxxviii. 1, descriptive of Judah's marriage, refers to the next words going before in the preceding chapter, concerning Joseph's sale to Potiphar. Had he been better acquainted with Scripture, he would have known that the phrases so frequently met with therein, such as "at that time," or "in those days," do not necessarily connect them with the clause immediately preceding,\* as in this instance he has thought fit to do. Judah was born about 9 years before Joseph, who was sold as a slave at the age of 17; and the descent into Egypt took place when he was 39, according to the computation from Scripture; consequently Judah must have been about 48 years of age at the same time. The bishop argues that Judah was then only 42, upon the assumption that Leah had no children during the first seven years of her marriage. This is highly improbable, and receives no countenance from Gen. xxix. 31. Believing that Judah was born in the fourth year of Jacob's marriage with Leah, and nine years before the birth of Joseph, he must have been 48 at the time of the descent to Egypt. The question, then, to be considered is, Could Judah have had grandchildren born to him at that age, in the manner recorded in Scripture? The age of puberty is known to be earlier in the East than in our northern climes; and if we place the marriages of Er and Onan, the sons of Judah, before they were 15 years of age, we do no more

\* Compare Deuteronomy x. 1 as another instance of this.

than what occasionally occurs in this country; remembering the case of an old schoolfellow, now a nobleman of high rank, who used to tell us that his father at 15 married his mother at 14. The years, then, of the generations from Judah to Hezron and Hamul, who were certainly born before the descent into Egypt, would stand thus: Judah 15 + Er 15 + 2 (the widowhood of Tamar) + Pharez 16 = 48. The bishop seeks to prolong the time of Tamar's widowhood by making her wait until Shelah, the third son, was old enough to marry the widow of his two elder brothers; but as he has no authority from Gen. xxxviii. 10, for saying what length of time should be allowed for an event which did not take place, it need not be noticed. And we think a reconsideration of the whole case may induce a doubt in the bishop's mind as to whether he has really overthrown the veracity of the Pentateuch by his inductions respecting the family of Judah.

§ 2. *Objection.*—It is stated in Scripture that Moses assembled *all* the congregation of Israel together at different times—that *all* the congregation stoned the blasphemer—that Joshua read the law of Moses before *all* the congregation, including women, children, and strangers. The bishop contends that *all* the congregation of Israel would cover a space of *twenty miles* (pp. 32, 33), and that Scripture records an impossibility. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—It is evident from numberless passages that Scripture puts a part for the whole; and if we only quote two they will be amply sufficient to meet the episcopal objection to the veracity of the Pentateuch. In the second

year of Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 605, Daniel was inspired to interpret the king's dream by declaring that "God had given thee a kingdom . . . wheresoever the children of men dwell . . . and hath made thee ruler over them *all*," Dan. ii. 37, 38. Possibly as it does not rest upon Scripture authority, the bishop will admit that at that very time Tarquinius Priscus was reigning in Rome, and some Emperor of the Vang dynasty in China, according to the testimony of Confucius, which shows at all events Nebuchadnezzar could not be literally reigning over *all* the children of men. Or if the bishop prefers, as the infidels of the early ages, like Celsus and Porphyry, or as the rationalists of the *present day* are in the habit of doing, to affirm that Daniel did not live at the time he is represented to have done in Scripture, but some centuries later, the argument would be simply stronger still, as secular history speaks more positively as to the formation of other kingdoms contemporaneous with the Babylonian monarchy. So likewise St. Paul in writing to the Colossians, i. 23, speaks of the Gospel in his day as having been then "preached to *every creature* which is under heaven;" yet no one will contend that this is to be understood in so literal a sense as to invalidate the testimony of St. Paul according to the bishop's theory of criticism.

§ 3. *Objection.*—According to the Mosaic law, Lev. iv. 11, 12, the priests were required to carry the sacrificed bullock without the camp unto a clean place; and the bishop, after asserting that the size of the camp of the Israelites must have equalled that of London, draws a comical picture of a priest "carrying a whole bullock on

his back" the distance from St. Paul's to the outer suburbs of the metropolis (p. 40), which of course was an impossibility. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch*, &c. Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop appears not to have been aware that the Jews reckoned three camps—1. Of the Tabernacle. 2. Of the Levites. 3. Of the congregation of the Israelites in general. And as the command referred doubtless to the first of these, his inference respecting distance is of no weight whatever. If, moreover, the bishop had been a Hebrew scholar, he would have seen that Moses' words do not warrant the unbecoming levity with which he has treated the subject, but were a simple order to have the bullock "*conveyed* without the camp," which would naturally be accomplished in one of the waggons provided for the service of the Tabernacle.

§ 4.—The *Objection* next in order which the bishop has introduced into his work, as one of his reasons for questioning the veracity of the Pentateuch, is so utterly unsuitable to his position as a Christian bishop, and to the reverential manner with which all Scripture subjects should be handled by those who are not professed sceptics; when we indicate that this miserable argument (if it be lawful to use such a term here) is to be found towards the end of page 40 in the bishop's work, and is the reverse of *clean*, we do all that is necessary on such an occasion.

§ 5. *Objection.*—In Exodus xxx. 11—13 the Mosaic law required that each Israelite should pay half a shekel (= 1s. 6d. in English money) as an offering to the Lord, "after the shekel of the sanctuary" (p. 41). The

sanctuary, observes the bishop, was not then in existence; and the redemption money could not have been paid after that pattern. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—If the sanctuary was not built at the time Moses gave this command, the Israelites knew it was to be built when they entered upon possession of the promised land. For immediately after they had passed through the Red Sea, we meet with a prediction respecting its future building in the hymn of praise which Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord:—"In the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for thy dwelling; in the *sanctuary* which thy hands have established," Exod. xv. 17. And we read that, previous to the mention of the redemption money, "the Lord spake unto Moses, Let them make a *sanctuary*, that I may dwell among them," Exod. xxv. 8. And though there is the difference of a letter in these three passages from Exodus descriptive of the "*sanctuary*"—*מקדש* being used in the first two places, and *קדש* in the last,—since these words are used indifferently by later writers, such as Amos and others, to describe the temple or sanctuary long after it had been built,—the bishop will find no support for the fanciful anachronism which he has sought to adduce in his war against the Bible.

§ 6. *Objection.*—Exodus xvi. 16 represents the children of Israel dwelling in *tents* in the wilderness. The bishop labours hard (pp. 45, 46) to show that the flight from Egypt was too rapid to allow of their carrying tents with them. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—As this sort of argument is used so often throughout the work, we can only conclude that he denies the miraculous nature of the Exodus as recorded in Scripture; and, to be consistent, he must deny the possibility of such a thing as a miracle, though repeatedly affirmed in God's Word.\* If this be the case, we would suggest the propriety, to say the least, of resigning his bishopric in order to enrol himself as a disciple of Celsus and Porphyry in ancient times, or of Voltaire and Hume in modern days. It will be a kindness to suppose that he has never read any work on miracles as an evidence of the truth of Scripture, and this is all that need be said in reply to the present objection.

§ 7. *Objection.*—In Exodus xiii. 18 we read that the children of Israel went out of Egypt *harnessed*. As they are elsewhere represented to be 600,000 full-grown men, and the bishop interprets the expression to mean *armed for war* (p. 48), he contends that it was impossible for them to obtain arms sufficient for such a purpose at the time of their escape from Egypt. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop refers to Alison's History of Europe to show the enormous expense of arming the Duke of Wellington's soldiers at Waterloo, which barely amounted to one-ninth of the number of the Israelites, in support of

\* The late Professor Archer Butler has justly observed, concerning the plausible attacks of the rationalists and sceptics, "they may deny the story of miracles, but can they destroy the miracle of the story? They may discredit this volume of miracles, for the Spirit of God does not now descend to silence its gainsayers; but can they unmiracle the obstinate fact of the miracle itself?"



this wonderful objection against the veracity of the Bible. Does the bishop know that the most expensive item in modern warfare is undoubtedly the artillery corps, and that gunpowder was *not* invented at the time of the Exode? To be sure, a friend told us that he had once witnessed a representation of the sacrifice of Isaac in a Romish country, in which Abraham was seen about to slay his son by means of a great horse-pistol; but possibly even the irrationalistic school, to which the bishop appears to belong, would admit this to be an anachronism. Had he referred to another chapter of Alison's History, he would have found authority for showing that some of the Tartar tribes in the service of the Russian government appeared, in the campaign of 1813, armed with their primitive weapons of bows and arrows, and which would certainly accord more with the arms of the Israelite shepherds, besides being easier to carry than the great guns which seem to have confused the bishop's brain. But in truth there is no need of finding "bows and arrows" for the 600,000 men of Israel, as far as the passage to which the bishop refers is concerned. The word חֲמֻשִׁים translated *harnessed*, does not necessarily mean *armed*, as the bishop wastes so many pages in vainly endeavouring to prove; but, as Onkelos and Aben Ezra have shown, it is to be understood as *accincti*, or girt about the loins, ready for the important journey which the Israelites were about to undertake. This is the simple, rational, and natural way of explaining a very plain passage in Scripture.

§ 8. *Objection.*—Exodus xii. 21-28. The bishop declares that it was impossible for Moses to communicate to *all the Israelites* the way by which God required them

to keep the Passover, as their numbers, he considers, equalled the population of London (p. 54). *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The population of London amounted, according to the last census, to 2,803,989. The passage to which the bishop refers reads, “Then Moses called for *all the elders* of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover.” The bishop’s logic is somewhat as follows: ‘The number of full-grown Israelites is stated in Scripture as 600,000, *therefore* all the HEADS of the families amounted to 2,803,989! Had the bishop committed such an arithmetical blunder when he went in for his degree at Cambridge, probably he would not have obtained the high honours he subsequently did.

§ 9. *Objection.*—Exodus iii. 22. The bishop, by referring to this passage (pp. 56, 57), hints at the usual objection of the infidels to it, without boldly avowing himself on their side, in a manner which requires to be noticed. *Thereby he infers that the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—Our translation represents the Israelites as *borrowing* jewels from the Egyptians, and, in place of returning them as they ought to have done, effected their escape with the spoil, thereby adding robbery to hypocrisy. This is the infidel mode of interpreting the passage in question. But the Hebrew word, שָׁאַל, so far from signifying to *borrow*, in the modern sense of the term, simply means to *ask*; and the context shows that God gave the Israelites such “favour in the sight of the

Egyptians," that their requests were readily granted. The LXX. and the Vulgate translate this and the parallel passage in Exodus xii. 35 *ask*; and the Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, and Coptic versions are the same as the Hebrew. Our present authorised version is almost the only one which uses the word *borrow*, as even the Genevan Bible, which preceded the authorised version, rightly translates the word *aske*. So likewise in the expression, "ye shall *spoil* the Egyptians," נָצַל is to be understood in the way in which the same word is used in 1 Sam. xxx. 22, to signify the *recovery* of spoil, which is evidently the sense in which we are to understand the passage here, as the Israelites only asked, and the Egyptians without fear freely gave. The Israelites thereby *recovered* from the Egyptians some portion of their wages of which they had been so long and so unjustly deprived.

§ 10. *Objection*.—Exodus xii. 5. The bishop calculates, upon the authority of "an experienced Natal sheep-master," that this passage implies a flock of 2,000,000 sheep (p. 58), and as there was not pasture enough in the wilderness for their support, *therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch*, &c. Q. E. D.

*Answer*.—The same reply given to Objection, § 6, is sufficient here.

§ 11. *Objection*.—Exodus xii. 37, 38. The bishop calling to mind the confusion manifested in his own household, consisting of between thirty and forty persons, on the occasion of a threatened invasion of the Zulus, declares it to be "utterly incredible and impossible"

(p. 61) that 600,000 men, "beside children and a mixed multitude," could have escaped from Egypt in the way they are represented as doing. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The Word of God hath said it, and nothing which Bishop Colenso hath thought, said, or done, will lead us to suppose that he is greater than God.

§ 12. *Objection.*—Exodus xvi. 35 states that the children of Israel were miraculously fed during their forty years wandering in the wilderness. But, as the Bible omits to state whether the cattle were also miraculously supported or not, the bishop observes, it were "idle to expend more time (he had already spent about seven pages) in discussing the question whether 2,000,000 of sheep and oxen could have been supported in the wilderness by the help of such insignificant wadies (as now exist in that country), which a drove of 100 oxen would have trampled down into mud in an hour" (p. 81). *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—We quite agree with the bishop as to the waste of time, premising that he has already wasted somewhat more than is necessary, and that it would have been more to his reputation if he had wasted less. His argument on this and several other occasions reminds one of an occurrence which took place a few years ago amongst some members of his profession, and which will bear an application even here. A bishop of the Anglican Church, now no more, who was reputed to sympathise rather strongly with that school which has produced so many pupils with Romeward proclivities, was once arguing,

amongst a circle of his clergy, that the age was not sufficiently advanced to appreciate the talents and abilities of his Papalising friends. To which an elderly presbyter, who was well qualified to express an opinion, immediately replied, "that he quite agreed with his lordship respecting the *unlearned* character of that age, in as far as they could be led astray by men who had proved themselves so devoid of learning as his friends in question." So we may safely assert of any who are captivated by the astounding ignorance which the rationalistic school in general, and Bishop Colenso in particular, have displayed in their onslaught against the veracity of the Bible.

§ 13. *Objection.*—Exodus xxiii. 29 speaks of God's intention not to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan at once on the entrance of the Israelites, "lest the land become desolate, and the wild beast multiply against thee." The bishop computes the size of the land of Canaan to be about double that of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, with a population of about half what the Israelites must have had when they took possession of the promised land (p. 82). Hence he argues that since the wild beasts have not multiplied in the Eastern countries, and they have not become desolate, *therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop's analogy does not hold good, from the simple fact that wild beasts do not now exist in England, as they existed in Canaan, when the Israelites entered the promised land, as may be shown by the fact of "lions" having increased in that part of it called Samaria on the

deportation of the ten tribes, which took place about 800 years after the Exode. The targum of Jonathan on this passage says, "When the beasts shall come to eat the carcasses of the Canaanites slain in war they may hurt thee,"—an explanation sufficient to satisfy the mind of any rational inquirer into the story of the entrance of the Israelites into the promised land.

§ 14. *Objection.*—Numbers iii. 43 speaks of the first-born males of the Israelites as numbering 22,273; which the bishop says, with somewhat questionable arithmetic, implies that "every woman must have had on an average 42 sons" (p. 84); which is certainly very unlikely, though an instance is known to the writer of a lady having had 36 children, of which number 22 were twins, and dying comparatively young at the age of 49. *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop's confusion arises from having omitted to notice that the children here mentioned do not include those who were born in Egypt before the destruction of "the first-born," as it was *after* that judgment that the law recorded in Exodus xiii. 2, was given, "Whosoever openeth the womb (*i. e.* hereafter) shall be mine." This Bonfrerius pointed out long ago, and had the bishop been aware of it, he might have avoided the comical blunder he has made.

§ 15. *Objection.*—Exodus xii. 40 contains the famous statement respecting the length of the sojourning of the Israelites "who dwelt in Egypt" as being 430 years. On this subject, which has been a fruitful theme for discus-

sion, Bishop Colenso, after an unnecessary long argument, at length for once arrives at a right conclusion, viz., that it must be computed from the time of Abraham's going down to Egypt until the Exode; but no sooner is he satisfied on this point, than he immediately starts the objection that, as the half of that period, or 215 years, is not sufficient to allow such an increase of Israelites from the 70, who went down to Egypt, to the 600,000 full-grown males who came out of Egypt,—and this he declares “can be shown beyond a doubt to be quite impossible” (p. 101),—*therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—It is curious to consider how this text has exercised the ingenuity of some of the bishop's brother sceptics in their endeavours to handle the Word of God in what they call a rational manner; *e. g.*, the bishop himself, thoroughly satisfied with his previous criticisms on the Pentateuch, suggests that 1377 should be the recognised number of full-grown Israelites who came out of Egypt in place of the 600,000 as stated in Scripture (p. 105). Bunsen adopts another view. Convinced, if not by the biblical record, by his beloved Manetho (who gives the figures 280,000), that the Israelites had increased during their sojourn in Egypt to somewhat more than the episcopal number of 1377, quietly prolongs their residence in that country from the time of Joseph to Moses, as being over 1400 years;\* while his friend Dr. Lepsius, of equally great authority in the mystery of hieroglyphics, takes a directly opposite view, by asserting that “only about 90 years intervened from the entrance of Jacob to the Exodus of

\* “Egypt's Place in Universal History,” vol. iv. pp. 92, 93.

Moses.”\* The question then remains to be considered: Could the Israelites have increased as rapidly during their 215 years’ residence in Egypt so as to raise their population to 2,000,000, the probable amount to afford the number of 600,000 full-grown males as stated in Scripture? “According to a table of Euler,” says Malthus, a very high authority on such matters, “instances of a population *doubling itself within less than thirteen years* have actually occurred for short periods. Sir William Petty supposes a doubling possible in so short a time as ten years.” In some states of North America the population has doubled itself within fifteen years. And if we apply this rate to the increase of the Israelites, a simple sum in arithmetical progression will show that they would have reached 2,293,000 persons in fifteen periods of doubling; which at fifteen years to each period would give 225 years. When, moreover, we remember the promises made to the Israelites respecting their increase, comparing it to the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea—when we remember the fecundity of the women for which Egypt was famous, as we shall presently see—when we believe polygamy to have been the rule, and monogamy the exception—when we find instances of men having families of ten children at the early age of 25, as was the case with Benjamin at the time of the descent to Egypt—when we know the average duration of life was certainly longer in those days than it is now,—remembering all this, there can be no difficulty in accepting the statement of Scripture respecting the increase of the children of Israel during their 215 years’ sojourn in the land of Egypt.

\* Lepsius’ “Letters,” translated by the Misses Horner, p. 475.



§ 16. *Objection.*—The bishop argues that Scripture implies no such fecundity among Hebrew women (p. 106) as to warrant the great increase in the population stated above; and he gives as authority for this wonderful conclusion, Exodus i. 19, where it is said that the Hebrew mothers gave birth before the midwives had time to wait upon them, which implies that they could not have borne twins as Aben Ezra fairly concludes they often did; and never bore more, as Aristotle and Pliny both declare was frequently the custom in Egypt.\* *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop is possibly an unmarried man. We may certainly assume that he has not the privilege of being able to say with the writer, that he has the rare felicity of being father of two sets of twins, in addition to other “olive branches round about his table.” If it will afford any satisfaction to the bishop, and help him to solve one of his Pentateuchal difficulties, the writer can state, on the best authority, that there is only a few minutes difference between the ages of his twin children respectively.

§ 17. *Objection.*—In one place the bishop considers the increase of the Israelites during their 215 years’ sojourn in Egypt may have amounted to the number of 5000 (p. 103); in another place, as we have already noticed, he reduces that number to 1377 (p. 105), which

\* “Within the last three months,” says a recent number of the *Barbadoes Globe*, “upon the testimony of the medical attendant in each case, three women in the parish of Christ Church, Barbadoes, were delivered of nine children, three at a birth each, and they are all doing well.”

he does upon the ground that Scripture states the Israelites were to escape from their bondage in the *fourth* generation after their descent into Egypt; and as it was utterly impossible for them to have increased in four generations to such numbers as Scripture states, *therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—Though it is undoubtedly true that the four generations of Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses spanned the interval of 215 years, which, as Moses was 80 years old at the time of the Exode, and Kohath (who was taken down by Levi to Egypt as an infant), by becoming a father at 68, and Amram at 67, might easily have been accomplished, the confusion existing in the bishop's mind is clearly owing to the way he limits the word "generation." We have already seen that there were four generations in the family of Judah when he was only 48, and that Benjamin (whose age may be computed from what is said respecting his sister Dinah), at 25, was the father of ten sons; and the bishop appears to admit that in the family of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, there were certainly nine or more generations between him and Joshua, who was full-grown at the time of the Exode,—all which lead to prove that there were many more generations in the various lines of the patriarchs than the four to which the prophecy especially refers. In our own country we have a striking instance of such an occurrence. In the family of the well-known Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, the late Lord Leicester, there is a difference of nearly sixty years between the eldest and the youngest of his children, owing to a second marriage late in life. This will serve to explain the different way

in which Scripture uses the term generation. Had the bishop remembered this, he might have escaped committing himself in the manner he has done.

§ 18. *Objection.*—The bishop states that there were *only* three priests in the wilderness to minister to the Israelites, viz., Aaron and his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar; and as thirteen cities were said to have been allotted to the Levites at the division of the land of Canaan, it was impossible for three men to occupy thirteen cities (p. 129). *Therefore the veracity of the Pentateuch, &c.* Q. E. D.

*Answer.*—The bishop evidently supposes that no one had other children besides those named in Scripture. If such were really the case, the descendants of Adam and of Noah would scarcely have peopled the world as rapidly as they must have done; and we have sufficient evidence besides that of Scripture for affirming it was so. Besides, though the family of Aaron was undoubtedly much larger at the time of the Exode than his sons Ithamar and Eleazar, the only two mentioned, yet there is no necessity for believing that it was large enough at that time to *fill* the thirteen cities allotted to them. The portion divided to them is named, which in due time they would fully occupy, and this is all which it concerns us to know.

After making this last objection, the bishop writes:—  
“We have now concluded our preliminary work of pointing out some of the *most prominent* inconsistencies and impossibilities which exist in the story of the Exodus as it is before us in the Pentateuch; and we have surely exhibited enough to relieve the mind from any superstitious

dread in pursuing further the consideration of this question" (p. 139).

Lest it should be thought that we have avoided any of the "most prominent impossibilities" in the Pentateuch, we must notice one more objection, which is brought forward in the Preface, and which is veiled under the touching scene of a Zulu sitting at the bishop's feet, while being instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, with his whole soul in revolt against a passage of Scripture which he very naturally misunderstood, and which the bishop as unnaturally was unable to explain. Exodus xxi. 20, 21, was the passage in question, where the Hebrew master is threatened with the punishment of death (see Gen. ix. 5, 6) if he beat a slave so that he dies under his hand, while, if he survived "a day or two," the master was not to be punished, because it might be presumed that the poor slave died through some other cause. The Bishop of Natal might have remembered one of the noblest characteristics of English law, that all penal laws should be construed as favourably as possible to the accused, when his "own heart and conscience fully sympathised" with the puzzled Zulu. The historian has drawn a graphic picture of a New Zealander in some future age seated on the broken arch of London Bridge, and contemplating the ruins of the mighty city which must once have there existed. We may be permitted to add another tableau to such a scene, and suppose this denizen of the new world recovering an ancient book of the nineteenth century, entitled "The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua, *critically* examined by the Right Rev. John William Colenso, D.D., Bishop of Natal," from which, to his amazement, he

gathers, that once on a time a scene was witnessed in Southern Africa of an old Zuluander seated before a Christian bishop, perplexing him with questions respecting the veracity of the Pentateuch. The well-instructed New Zealander will doubtless pronounce the nineteenth century to have been redolent of much simplicity, much scepticism, and much ignorance, and will naturally conclude that the bishops of the English Church of that age must have held somewhat curious ideas of biblical criticism, judging from the specimen presented to him by the recovered treasure of the episcopal ruler of Natal.

Such are the objections of Bishop Colenso to the veracity of the Pentateuch—objections against which little else need be urged than that they must seem rather cumbersome and fanciful to those who do not know the Bible,\* and on the whole somewhat inadequate to those who do. This might be said of objections raised by laymen who ridicule the pretensions of the Bible to state what is true, such as Bunsen, or Goodwin the lay interloper amongst those who have been curtly described as “*Sept. Contr. Christum*,” but when it is remembered that it is a professed ruler of the Christian Church who writes—“Whatever real founda-

\* We must own ourselves wrong in one instance at least. For since writing the above, we have found one of the bishop's defenders addressing a public journal under the signature of “Eagle Eye,” upon the principle, we presume, of *Lucus a non lucendo*, who pronounces his arguments “powerful;” advocates the necessity of “trying to be Christians,” as he expresses it, by “removing the interpolations of priests who have made Christ appeal to Moses to authenticate his mission; and who manifests his knowledge of Scripture by affirming that “the Pentateuch was not alluded to, and probably unknown to the Israelites from the time of Othniel, the first judge, to the date of the 20th chapter of Judges—a period of about 400 years, according to the uncertain chronology!”

tion the Pentateuch may have had in the ancient history of the people, it is mixed up, at all events, with so great an amount of contradictory matter, that it *cannot be regarded as historically true*" (p. 111), we stand aghast at the complexion of the writer's mind, which can allow him to hold high office in the Church as a friend, when in reality he proves himself an insidious and unconscious foe.

It is difficult to conceive how so learned a man as Bishop Colenso could have committed himself in the way he has done by his *critical* examination of a few parts of the Word of God. His objections will appear to every one, who has given attention to the subject, most puerile; his Hebrew very limited; his arithmetic questionable; and his reasoning of that nature which must be pronounced illogical in the extreme. This melancholy position for a Christian bishop owes its origin to his inability to receive the Bible as St. Paul commended the Thessalonians for doing—"not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." Happy would it have been for the bishop had he been able to have realised Bacon's just description respecting the Scriptures, that, "being given by inspiration, and not by human reason, they differ from all other books in the Author, which by consequence doth draw on *some difference to be used by the expositor*. For the Inditer of them did know four things, which no man attains to know:—which are the mysteries of the kingdom of glory; the perfection of the laws of nature; the secrets of the hearts of men; and the future succession of ages,"\*—in place of being led astray by what has not been inaptly termed "the dreamy

\* "Advancement of Learning," p. 265.

nebulosities of used-up German speculation." Whether the bishop's criticisms extend so far as those of M. Earnest Renan, who confidently declares that the grandfather of Abraham, who is represented in the Pentateuch as having "lived twenty-nine years and begot 'Terah' was probably a town and not a person at all;" or of Professor Hey, who has propounded a dictum that the *ἵνα πληρωθῇ* ("that it might be fulfilled") of Scripture is equivalent to the French *apropos*, or any other of the wild vagaries which the rationalistic school have recently put forth as specimens of its competency to examine *critically* the Word of God, we cannot say; but we have no hesitation in applying the language with which the "Edinburgh Review" condemned the Essay of Dr. Williams on the Biblical researches of Bunsen to the bishop himself, and which *mutato nomine* would appropriately read as follows: "Anything 'more unbecoming' than some of the Bishop of Natal's remarks we never have read in writings professing to be written seriously."

It would have been well if the bishop, before promulgating his present *critical* examination of the Pentateuch (and if report speak truly, this book is *scholarship itself*, compared with his first attempt as originally written at Natal), had attained even to the same measure of faith on this subject as one of the seven essayists, who rightly observes, "No member of a communion or society is bound, either by public or private duty, to unsettle received opinions, where they may seem to be erroneous, unless he have a reasonable hope, as it appears to him, that he shall be able to supply *something better in their place*."\* We are

\* Rev. H. B. Wilson's "Bampton Lectures," p. 281.

not aware whether the bishop has attempted to supply anything in the place of that to which he objects in the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua; but however confident he may be in his own wisdom, he can scarcely hope, by the specimen he has already afforded the world of his critical powers, to convince devout inquirers of his competency to undertake so tremendous a responsibility. Chateaubriand, in the Introduction to his *Geniè du Christianisme*, has well remarked that, “ever since Christianity was first published to the world, it has been continually assailed by three kinds of enemies—heretics,\* *sophists*, and those apparently frivolous characters who destroy everything with the shafts of ridicule.” It will be no disparagement to the bishop’s intellectual powers if we rank him amongst the second of these, and of whom it has been written in ancient times, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” 1 Cor. i. 19, 20.

However much, therefore, the bishop may claim a hearing as an earnest inquirer after that truth which he is bound by the most sacred ties to uphold and to defend, there is such palpable unfitness for the task he has assumed, that we cannot help fearing Chalmers’ test of instinctive evidence is plainly applicable here. “Where,” said that master spirit of the age he adorned—“where the truth-loving spirit is not, the truth itself cannot come. . . . It is the part of Christians to rise like a wall of fire around

\* “Criticism,” as Dr. McCaul has well said, “did not exist first and produce the heretic, but the heretic existed first and produced criticism.”



the integrity and inspiration of Scripture." Did Bishop Colenso know anything of "the inspiration of the Spirit," in the sense in which the Church, of which he is one of the chief rulers, uses the expression; had he sought for more of that "internal witness" of which St. Paul speaks, in his own heart, in place of putting forth such crude and puerile objections to the veracity of God's Word, he would have avoided the unseemly and melancholy position to which he is now reduced. The work of Him who inspired "holy men of God to speak" the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in the awakening, renewing, sanctifying, teaching, guiding, edifying, and building up of every human being, whether clergy or laity, who is desirous of the inheritance amongst the spirits of the blessed above, as contrasted with anything like appealing to reason in the sense of the rationalistic school of the present day, may be truly characterised as the grand catholic and evangelical doctrine of all times. And until that fundamental verity is fully realised, there can be no true perception of the motive power which has actuated the faithful disciple of Christ in all ages. The manner and way of the Spirit's action upon the soul is truly mysterious, and we cannot attempt to unveil it. As the dew which falls from heaven in the stillness of the night is found at morning light hanging upon the leaves and enriching the arid soil, and we naturally seek to know whence it came, and who hath begotten it, so is the way of the Spirit's dealing with the soul of man. To such earnest seekers after Divine truth will this gracious testimony be ever borne, that "God hath given to them eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Whereas, on the other hand, he who is content with letting his religious faith rest upon the reasoning powers of his own corrupt and unsanctified mind, and who is destitute of the witness of the Spirit, from whom alone, as our Church teaches, "all good things do come," absolutely knows nothing of the power of Holy Scripture, critical or otherwise, or of its great and glorious design. Such an one may discuss its evidences, may speculate upon its doctrines, may fancy that he can reason about its truths, and even may observe its laws and institutions; but as long as he is without its immortalising principle, he can only be compared to a man amusing himself with the leaves, instead of feeding on the fruits of the tree of life.